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PRESS INFORMATION

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Saab and FMV air-to-air test trials with Swedish tanker

The first test of air-to-air refueling with a Gripen aircraft from a Swedish Air Force C-130 Hercules successfully completed.

The test flights were performed over the Baltic Sea east of the Swedish coastline. The C-130 from the Swedish Air Force wing F 7 was operated from FMV Test Center and Gripen aircraft were operated from Saab. Saab's verification flight tests included a total of six sorties with test aircrafts of the latest standard of Gripen, the Gripen C single-seat and Gripen D dual-seat. The results were very successful.

"The verification flights have been conducted according to plan and all the objectives have been fulfilled. During the campaign the Air-to-Air refueling capability between Gripen and the C-130 Tanker has been verified within the required envelope including refueling at various speeds, altitudes and with various external loads. Now FMV will continue to integrate Gripen's air-to-air refueling capability in the Swedish Air force" says Mats Thorbiörnson, Chief test pilot at Saab Aerosystems.

This was the first in a series of tests that Saab together with FMV conducted in order to verify the systems ability to support the Gripen aircraft for Air-to-Air refueling operations. In April 2005 Saab verified Gripen's air-to-air refueling capability with a NATO standard compatible tanker from the South African Air force. The Gripen C and D are fully NATO-interoperable and meet the demands for both national and international operations. The air-to-air refueling capability increases Gripen's operational range and endurance, a major advantage in international operations.

The project has been ongoing since the year 2000 and the goal is to have one certified Swedish Air Force C-130 Hercules demonstrator for Air-to-Air refueling operational from January 2006. The C-130 is equipped with the latest generation Air-to-Air refueling technology including an "all electric pod". Two flat "palletized" extra fuel tanks will be added to the system during the spring 2006.

Saab is one of the world's leading high-technology companies, with its main operations focusing on defense, aviation and space. The group covers a broad spectrum of competence and capabilities in systems integration.

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